

HOOKEDNOW

A NEWSLETTER FOR FLY FISHERS
BY

DAVE SKIP RICK
HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

Welcome to HookNow the new e-newsletter by Dave Hughes, Skip Morris, and Rick Hafele designed to help you further develop your fly fishing skills whether you are new to fly fishing or an old timer.

Dave Hughes, Skip Morris and Rick Hafele need little introduction as they have each been contributing to fly fishing literature for over 40 years. Between them they account for over 50 books and instructional DVDs, plus hundreds more magazine articles. They are also sought after speakers by fly fishing clubs, sportsmen shows and conclaves.

Each issue of *HookedNow* will take a particular topic of fly fishing, and through text, photos, and video Dave, Skip, and Rick will each give their own unique perspective. Dave, the oldest of the three, began fly fishing when fiberglass was a revolutionary new product. He's also written enough books to give trees a nightmare. Skip's specialty is fly tying. His books and videos get beginners tying beautiful effective flies and help experienced tiers use new methods and materials. He also brings to the table more than 45 years of fly fishing experience. Rick is a biologist, an aquatic entomologist to be exact. He's worked over 30 years as an aquatic biologist and has been fly fishing for over 45 years. He knows hatches better than trout.

Thus, you will see how three very experienced anglers with different backgrounds and specialties tackle the same question. A new issue of *HookedNow* will come out every other month with a timely topic to help you continue your development to the next stage and enjoy fly fishing even more.

In this first issue of *HookedNow* Dave, Skip, and Rick discuss their favorite flies for fishing in the cold months of winter. Enjoy!

Subscribe at: hookednow.com



Dave Hughes on Winter Nymphs



It's a throwaway line that you fish during the bitter part of the year with streamers and nymphs large enough that trout can see them down there, that are big enough to motivate trout into moving against their best instincts to conserve energy. You fish these flies right on the bottom, cast them over and over, don't expect a strike until your toes are frozen, your fingers are so brittle some of them get knocked off when you accidentally bump the rod, and your nose has an icicle hanging down so far it interferes with the feeble workings of what's left of your line hand. But fishing, surprisingly, reflects the nature of the angler, and not all anglers are so desirous of catching trout that they'll fish in such rotten conditions.

The first thing we have to do, when trying to decide what flies might become our winter favorites, is to assess our own willingness to fight nature in our pursuit of a few trout to fight. There are those of us, and I might or might not confess to being among them, who would rather watch for stretches of winter weather that are more civilized, that allow fishing that is at least slightly comparable to what we do during the rest of the year: who insist to enjoy our time out there.

Rivers and streams are often as low and clear in winter as they are at any other time of year. If high water, and cloudy water, are eliminated as differences in the fishing, a couple of major variations still remain: first, the water is almost certain to be colder, therefore the fish less active, and second, insects are far less

likely to be hatching, causing the trout to be, once again, less active, because they have less to be active about. Aside from a consequent lack of willingness to chase flies very far to take them, this couple of causes results in a pair of outcomes: first, trout hold in somewhat 'softer' water than they do at other times of year, where they have less current to fight, and second, they lose some of their territorial instincts, tend to be bunched up rather than sprinkled over a broadcast set of lies.

So the major change you might find it necessary to make in winter fishing, as opposed to spring, summer, and fall fishing, is in the way you read the water. If trout are concentrated, and you fish where they're not located, it's unlikely that you'll catch them no matter the fly you fish. Make your first major change, when fishing winter instead of warmer parts of the year, a change in the way you read the water. It's not necessarily the subject of this piece, but learn to look for places where it looks like trout might be comfortable, and that you might not focus your fishing on when it's warmer, and see if you can't locate some trout down there. If you find one, it's likely you will have found a bunch.

Given that change, then how do you select a small set of winter flies, and as an important corollary, how do you fish them?

My main criteria for nymphs selected for fishing in winter is confidence in the fly. Conditions are inherently tougher. The prospects for catching trout are slightly to significantly diminished. I would not consider rigging a nymph to the end of my tippet that has not provided lots of success for me, at other times of year, and preferably, at all times of year.

So the answer becomes simple: my favorite winter nymphs are the same ones I use most often in all other parts of the year. I have a narrow set of flies I use when conditions fail to point to the use of anything specific. In winter I encounter the highest proportion of those sorts of conditions. So I'm nearly always armed with my most dependable nymphs: with one or more often two of those dressings that do the most to enliven my expectations. Rather than switching to a set of nymphs specific to winter, I fall

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

back on flies that I find most effective at all times of year.

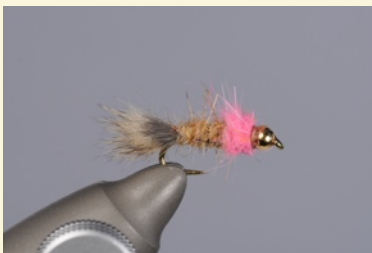
The first criteria in your own selection of winter nymphs, then, should be to use those that you have the most confidence in, and that have caught the most trout for you, no matter the time of year or conditions on the stream or river. Don't use anything I'm going to suggest here unless you haven't developed your own set of favorites. I promise you that if you already have flies that you think are going to catch trout whenever you get them into water, those flies are going to work better for you than my flies, in winter or any other season.

Given that, it's wise to have a small set of flies that cover the color and size spectrums: large, medium, small, and tiny; dark, drab, moderate, and shiny. That way you can offer trout all sorts of choices, to see which they prefer on any given winter day.

My own favorites follow. If you catch me nymphing, at any time of year, you'll probably find one of them, possibly in combination with another of them, or with something else more dependent on the specific situation, tied in tandem to my tippet. Some, but not all, of the following flies are listed, with tying instructions, in my book *Nymphs for Streams and Stillwaters*, (Stackpole Books; to order go to MyFlies.com).

Pink Squirrel (originator: John Bethke)

Hook: 1X long, size 12-16
Head: Gold bead
Weight: 10 turns non-lead wire, diameter of hook shank
Thread: Tan 6/0 or 8/0
Tail: Pine squirrel guard hairs
Abdomen: 1/2 pine squirrel fur, 1/2 beige sparkle yarn
Thorax: Pink rabbit fur
(Hareline #04)



Note: This is my simplification of John Bethke's original Pink Squirrel. He's a guide and professional tier from Wisconsin. He sent me a dozen of his tie, and it was so effective on my home Deschutes, and everywhere else that I've used it, that I was almost astounded by it. I fish it a lot, usually in size 16, most often as the small fly behind the Salmonfly Simplicity, but also at times as the medium fly above a Pheasant Tail. I highly recommend you contact John and order some of his flies rather than use my bastardized version; you'll catch more fish with it: John Bethke, Westby, WI; QJLB@yahoo.com.

Salmonfly Simplicity (originator: Dave Hughes)

Hook: 3X long, size 6-12
Head: Black tungsten bead
Weight: 15 turns non-lead wire, diameter of hook shank
Thread: Black 3/0 or 6/0
Tails: Black biots, forked
Abdomen: Mix of 2 parts black rabbit fur, 1 part rust and 1 part charcoal sparkle yarn
Gills: White ostrich herl
Legs: Black rubber legs
Thorax: Same as abdomen



Note: This is a corruption of Charles Brooks's Montana Stone. The original works at least as well, probably better, but this is how mine has evolved. Both the original and my version have captured a lot of trout for me--confidence! I tie and fish them more often in sizes 10 and 12 than I do in 6 and 8. It's my most common big nymph to use in a two-fly combo.

Lightning Bug (originator: Larry Graham)

Hook: 1X long, size 12-16
Head: Gold bead
Weight: 12 turns non-lead wire, diameter of hook shank
Thread: Black 6/0 or 8/0
Tails: Pheasant tail fibers
Rib: Fine copper wire
Body: Flat pearlescent or holographic Mylar
Wing case: Same as body
Thorax: Peacock herl
Legs: Hen back fibers



Note: This is obviously the bright nymph in my box. I've had pretty terrific luck on it at times on winter streams, usually in size 14 or 16. I had never tried it until I was researching *Nymphs for Streams and Stillwaters*. It took tying a dozen to work out the steps for photos. I stuck that dozen in my nymph box, tried them first on Owyhee River brown trout in winter. It worked such wonders that it jumped instantly into my stable as my bright fly, and has caught so many trout since then, in such a wide variety of situations, that it remains there.

Most of the trout you see Rick Hafele holding in photos are ones I caught on this fly, and he asked to borrow them for photos, because he rarely ever catches a fish himself, and feels left out if we don't take his photo sometimes holding a nice one. You have to feel sorry for Rick; if you ever catch a nice trout, and he's around, please offer to let him hold it, and take a picture of him with it. Send it to me care of Pharate.

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

Pheasant Tail (originator: Frank Sawyer)

Hook: 1X long, size 16-20
Thread: XS Copper Ultra Wire
Tail: Pheasant tail fibers
Body: Pheasant tail fibers



Note: This is another one that I discovered while working on the research for *Nymphs for Streams and Stillwaters*. I decided to back away from the Pheasant Tail as we tie it, either as a flashback or with pheasant tail for the thorax, in Al Troth's popular version. Both, by the way, are remarkably effective winter nymphs. But I wanted to learn to tie it with copper wire, as originator Frank Sawyer did on the Dove and other British chalk streams. It took a long time to work out the proper proportions; my best source became the great Darrel Martin's book *Fly-Tying Methods*.

You can get the right size wire for this nymph by stripping #18 electrical wire. The original Sawyer tie turned out to have the right brightness, density, and shape to fish perfectly for me, winter, spring, summer, and fall, and especially when small blue-wing olive (*Baetis*) nymphs are active, which they are, more often than most other insects, in the winter of our fly fishing season.

Last Word from Dave:

I read all of Darrel Martin's books when they came out, most devoutly *Fly-Tying Methods* and *Micropatterns*, but over the years got away from their lessons. About a year ago I was on the track of something, and went into Darrel again, because so many trails in fly tying lead to his books. I decided to re-read him; all of him that I could find. And I realized that I'd missed something in Darrel the first time. He spends a lot of time in Europe, so he's into a lot of innovations that are made over there, and over here as well, before they trickle down to where the rest of us become aware of them: bead heads, CDC, etc. In fact, Darrel is very often the agent of that trickling down of information, through his books and through his articles in *Fly Rod & Reel* magazine, for which he was long fly tying columnist and is still fly tying contributor.

But I already knew that about him. What I'd missed was behind that. Darrel is also very cognizant of fly tying history. The more I read his books the more I realized that Darrel is a bridge between fly tying's history and fly tying's future. He fuses knowledge of traditions--methods both well-known and obscure--with knowledge of what's on the cutting edge. He has a brilliant mind, has encyclopedic knowledge of flies and fly tying, and is a fine writer. If you haven't read Darrel Martin, you've missed a deeply satisfying treat, and at the same time a highly valuable education.



*Cold water and cold air
can make for cold fishing
But there's still fish to be
caught. If one pattern
doesn't work try another.
Try fishing slower water
than you might otherwise
fish. Experiment until
you feel that tug on the
end of your line!*

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

Skip Morris on Winter Trout Flies



At nearly age 60, I'm no fan of icy fishing. What used to be merely uncomfortable--stinging cheeks, numb toes, and worst of all wet hands--has become almost painful. But after a few weeks cooped up by a Christmas-card fire and living within the confines of a few rooms, I daydream of a trout bouncing against the rod. Since I know that with good timing and perhaps (though not necessarily) a bit of

travel, even in the dead of winter this dream can be realized. So I end up fishing from November through March a few times every year. I rarely regret it.

Where I live, winters are mild and trout lakes can be good even in January, when the weather is right. But in most places winter offers something to the ice fisher and perhaps the ice skater, but nothing to the lake fly fisher. So I'll stick with rivers. Usually combined with a speaking tour, I do manage to visit winter trout rivers every year. Again, stinging hands, but no regrets.

Throughout most of North America there is some sort of river fishing for trout year around. If you live in a really frigid state or Canadian province where winter river fishing is hopeless, you can always escape to the South for a chance to work a trout fly in the currents. Have a relative or close friend in Colorado or New Mexico or California you could visit for the holidays? Purchase your airline ticket and then pack your four-section rod and the rest and go.

Nearly all the winter trout fishing I've found in rivers was about a nymph fished dead drift or a hatch of blue-winged olive mayflies, midges, or, rarely, winter stoneflies. Too rarely, really, for me to say much about the stones (though I've occasionally had some fast fishing with them).

For nymphs in winter, I face the same broad choice I face any time of year: attractor or imitation. My approach to imitative nymphs is to show the trout

something familiar. For example, if the river has a great hatch of golden stones in the summer, I'm likely to fish a big imitation of a golden stone nymph in winter simply because the trout are used to seeing them and watching for them. Rocks tumble, due to high water or the constant settling of a stream bed, or the simple fact that nymphs make mistakes and get swept away. There's another angle to that however.

The golden stonefly takes two or three years to mature. This means that some middle-agers are down there, each offering a substantial bite for the trout. So an insect that takes more than a year to mature--especially a big insect--is a fine candidate for imitation in winter, even if the insect won't hatch for months. But imitating a PMD mayfly nymph in January makes no sense to me. The nymph matures in only a year, so in winter it's really tiny. If the trout are calm in low water or a quiet tailwater or spring creek and seem to want a tiny nymph, I'll give them one. But I'm not worried about imitating specifically a pinpoint PMD nymph.

Insects that hatch early in the season are another matter. March Brown mayfly nymphs (which can hatch as early as February) will be of good size in midwinter and an imitation may be worth a shot.



Attractors? I'll try any of them. I tend to reach for my Gabriel's Trumpet out of habit, in gold or pink or brown or purple. It's caught me so many trout under so many conditions I always tie it on with confidence. But no fly is always right. So try a Flashback Pheasant Tail or a Rainbow Warrior--it's hard to be sure what

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

design and color of attractor will work best, so you just keep trying new ones until the fish come.

Whatever nymph you fish in winter, fish it deep and dead drift--winter trout won't move far for your fly with their chilly blood creeping through narrowed veins.

Emergers and dry flies aren't worth much in winter without a hatch. With a hatch, they can be plain fun. Midwinter hatches usually come off when the water reaches its highest temperature of the day, sometime in the afternoon. During a spate of unusually warm weather, they can start earlier.

Since I encounter winter blue-winged olives and midges over and over, I'll keep to them--the little stuff. I still fall back on the old standard for midges: the Griffith's Gnat. It's easy to tie, so I can turn out a bunch of 20s, 22s, and 24s in pretty short order. Sometimes I tie 24s and 26s, because sometimes that's what it takes to imitate the smaller specimens. Like I said, little stuff... But if there are enough of them on the water--and midges typically do hatch in abundance--drowsy winter trout will rise to sip them. There are other good flies for this work. If the fish are refusing the Gnat, I'll try a midge-pupa imitation such as the mercury Black Beauty.

For winter *Baetis* (blue-winged olive) mayflies I use my Morris Emerger, BWO, but a Compara-Dun or Gulper Special or RS2 in size 20 or 18 will serve honorably. As with the Griffith's Gnat, I just throw it upstream of a rising trout with sufficient slack in line and leader, mend if I must, watch for a take.

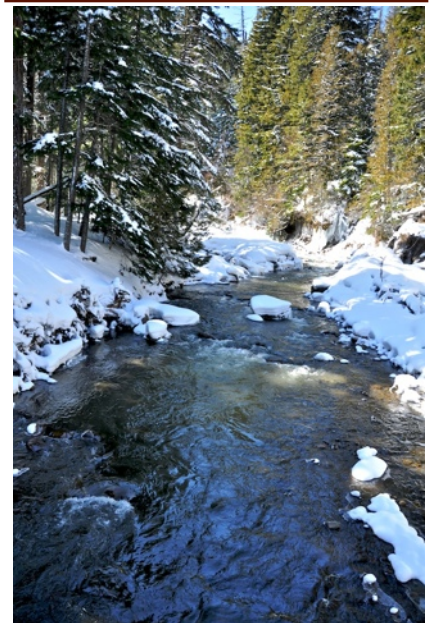
I've caught winter trout on streamers, but seldom. But often enough that I know it can work. The last time I pulled this off was with a good old-fashioned Black Ghost twitched deep. I guess it just swung too close to a trout lying quietly down on the riverbed and looked too good to pass up. That's not much to offer on winter streamer fishing, but it's what I have. Obviously, I'm really a midwinter nymph/emergent/dry-fly man.

If the happy distraction of the holidays isn't enough or you always tire of the short days and indoor life of winter, watch for a mild day and head out to a trout river. You'll likely have no regrets when the day is done.

SKIP ON WINTER TROUT- STREAM TECHNIQUES

No matter how unseasonably pleasant the day, winter rivers are cold and cold-blooded trout will be sluggish. Don't expect them to dart to your fly. So if you're fishing a nymph, get it deep and fish it dead drift. Since you may have to get it closer to a trout than in summer, be thorough--make plenty of casts and try to drift the fly across all the holding water. It may even take a couple of close passes of the fly to move a lethargic fish. Same with a streamer--slow and deep and lots of casts.

Use a dry fly or emergent only if the fish are rising. You may have to drift the fly right into the fish rather than just near him. But on the whole, rising winter trout are in feeding mode and more active than they'll be the rest of the day. So fish the dry fly or emergent in winter about as you would in the summer.



HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

Nymph Patterns (clockwise from top): Golden stone, midge pupa, March brown, & Gabriel's trumpet



Some other winter patterns (clockwise from top): Gulper Special, Griffith's gnat, & Black Ghost



Bird's Stonefly (Cal Bird - tied by Skip Morris)

Hook: Heavy wire, 3X long, sizes 10 to 4.

Thread: Orange 8/0, 6/0, or 3/0.

Weight: Lead wire.

Tails: Dyed-brown goose biots.

Rib: Orange floss or heavy thread.

Abdomen: Brown muskrat fur or brown-dyed rabbit fur.

Wing-Case: Dark mottled turkey primary or dyed-brown teal.

Legs: A furnace or brown saddle hackle.

Thorax: Peacock herl.

Mercury Midge - Black (Pat Dorsey - tied by Skip Morris)

Bead: One tiny crystal (clear) bead.

Hook: Heavy wire (or standard to light wire), short shank to standard length, sizes 24 to 18.

Thread: Black 8/0 (or finer).

Rib: Fine silver (or gold or fine copper) wire.

Abdomen: The black working thread.

March Brown Skip's Nymph (Skip Morris)

Hook: Heavy wire, 2x long, size 12-14

Thread: Black 6/0 or 8/0

Tails: Tan biots, forked

Rib: Copper wire

Abdomen: Brown nymph dubbing

Shell back: 6-8 pheasant tail fibers

Wing case: Dark mottled turkey primary

Legs: Tan hackle

Thorax: Same as abdomen

Gabriel's Trumpet, Gold (Skip Morris)

Hook: Heavy wire, curved shank (scud/pupa style), sizes 16-10

Bead: Gold

Weight: Lead or lead-substitute wire, 0.015-inch. (You can use larger-diameter wire for the largest hook sizes.)

Thread: Gold or yellow 8/0 or 6/0.

Tails: Gold, amber, or yellow goose biots.

Rib: Fine red copper wire.

Abdomen: Gold Flashabou (or Krystal Flash).

Wing-Case: Mottled-brown turkey primary

Thorax: Tan (or gold or amber) ostrich herl. Wind the herl back, bind its end with a few tight thread-turns, and then spiral the thread forward through the herl to toughen it.

Legs: One ginger (or gold or tan) hen-neck hackle, wound as a short collar behind the bead, trimmed on top or parted down the sides before pulling the wing case over the top.

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

Gulper Special (Al Troth - tied by Skip Morris)

Hook: Light wire, standard length to 1X long, sizes 22-12.

Thread: 8/0 or 6/0 in a color to blend with the body.

Parachute Wing: Poly yarn in white, orange, yellow, or green (whatever color you can best see).

Parachute Hackle: Any reasonable mayfly color.

Tail: Hackle fibers, same color as the hackle.

Body: Synthetic dubbing.

Griffith's Gnat (George Griffith - tied by Skip Morris)

Hook: Light-wire, short to standard length, sizes 26 to 18.

Thread: Olive, gray, or black 8/0 or finer.

Hackle: One, grizzly, spiraled up the body.

Body: Peacock herl.

Black Ghost

Hook: Heavy wire, 4X to 6X long, sizes 10 to 6.

Thread: Black 8/0, 6/0, or 3/0.

Tail: Dyed-yellow hackle fibers.

Rib: Flat silver tinsel, thin to medium.

Body: Black floss.

Throat: Yellow (usually a bunch of fibers bound underneath the shank, but sometimes a wound hackle with the fibers pulled down and bound at their base to stay there).

Wing: Four white saddle hackles, in two sets, the sets cupped together.

Rick Hafele on Winter Bugs & Nymph Fishing



In some ways there is no better time to fish nymphs than winter. You know the usual quote; *Nymphs make up 70 to 80 percent of a trout's diet.* Well, in the winter that number goes up. I'm not sure by how much, but given that there are few hatches and fewer to no terrestrial insects to eat, trout have little left to eat but nymphs. Another

reason nymphs matter in the winter is that most aquatic insects are at their greatest abundance as nymphs or larvae during the winter. Thus when hatches and terrestrial insects are at their lowest numbers, nymphs and larvae are at their highest. The end result is that for most successful winter trout fishing you will need to fish nymphs.

Because the greatest abundance of nymphs occur in the winter, there is going to be a wide variety of nymphs in a healthy trout stream for trout to choose from. Sometimes this means just about any buggy looking nymph pattern will catch fish. But it can also mean that if trout have a lot to choose from they get choosy. So just because the water's cold and

you have ice in your guides don't expect the trout to fall over themselves for just any old fly you throw to them.

Just as in other seasons I like to have some idea of what type of aquatic insects are abundant when I'm fishing in the winter, so I still take a little time to sample the bugs in the stream and look for clues for what would be most available for trout to eat. Mostly I look for insects I know are active and likely to be drifting in the current.

At the top of this list are mayflies with swimming nymphs. The most important of these are the blue-winged olives (Family Baetidae; genus *Baetis*). These little guys can be very abundant throughout the winter and because they are active swimmers they end up drifting in the current - a lot. Trout feeding studies also show that trout have a high preference for *Baetis* nymphs whenever they are present. So when blue-winged olive (BWO) nymphs are abundant, the



Baetis nymph

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

Kyrstal flash BWO nymph is my first choice.

I think the keys to this little nymph are it's slender silhouette, flashy body, buggy thorax, and sinkability, meaning the materials it is tied with help it sink. As a bonus it's also easy to tie and very durable.

You might find a BWO hatch in the winter, but more likely there will just be nymphs getting into the drift. This means you'll want to fish the fly close to the stream bottom, and while the nymphs are good swimmers, in most situations letting your fly drift naturally with the current will be most effective. At the tail end of each cast you can impart some twitches and a little more action. One important factor seems to be size. These are small mayflies and I have consistently found that a size 18 will out fish a size 14 most every time. Thus, while you might be tempted to tie these in sizes you can actually see, remember to pick a pattern that matches the size of the naturals where you are fishing. They are never big!

The other mayfly nymph in my winter selection in the bead-head pale-morning dun or PMD. In many ways this fly looks a lot like a bead-head Hare's ear nymph, another very effective pattern. And like the Hare's ear it resembles a variety of different natural nymphs. While this fly is called a PMD, in the winter the real PMD's are small and not as important as they will be in late spring and early summer. This fly pattern, therefore, is more likely imitating a March brown nymph (Family Heptageniidae, genus *Rhithrogena*) that matures in late winter. I also tie this fly without the wingcase. The result is a fly that looks a lot like a caddis pupa as well as a mayfly nymph. While caddis hatches aren't likely in the winter, as you move into March several different caddis hatches start, and one of the best is the *Glossosoma* or turtle-case caddis. The pupae of these guys are roughly a size 16 or 18, and this fly does a reasonable job of matching them.

Like the BWO I most often fish this fly near the bottom with a dead drift presentation using a floating line, strike indicator and split as needed to get to the bottom. If I know caddis are hatching, I will let it sink

I have four nymphs patterns I don't want to be without when fishing in the winter:

Krystal Flash BWO Nymph (Rick Hafele)



Hook: 1X short scud hook, size 16-18
Thread: Tan 8/0
Tails: 4-8 tan hackle fibers
Body: 4-6 strands of Krystal flash twisted together to form rope. Keep body slender.
Wingcase: Same as body
Thorax & Legs: Pine squirrel dubbing with guard hairs

Krystal Flash Green Rock Worm (Rick Hafele)



Hook: 2X long nymph hook, size 10-14
Head: Gold bead
Weight: 12 turns non-lead wire, diameter of hook shank
Thread: Green 6/0 or 8/0
Body: 4-6 strands of green Krystal flash twisted together to form rope.
Thorax: Pine squirrel spun in dubbing loop

Note: These two flies fished in tandem is one of my favorite nymph fishing combinations.

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

then use the rod to lift it back up towards the surface, a.k.a. a Leisenring lift. If you are specifically using it to imitate a rising caddis pupa you can do away with the strike indicator, but you will probably still need a split shot on the tippet to sink it a couple feet deep unless you are fishing in very slow moving water.

Speaking of caddis, caddis larvae are also abundant during the winter months. Some of the most numerous are the net-spinning caddis (Family: Hydropsychidae - Genus: *Hydropsyche* & *Cheumatopsyche*) and the free-living green rock worms (Family: Rhyacophilidae - Genus: *Rhyacophila*). The Krystal flash green rock worm nymph is tied to specifically match a green rock worm larva, but many species of net-spinning caddis larvae are also bright green. This nymph therefore, does a good job of imitating a wide range of available caddis larvae. You can easily change the body color if you find that bright green isn't exacting what you want for your area.

I almost always fish this pattern with the classic shot and indicator approach. The naturals don't swim and drift with little or no movement close the stream bed. The shot and indicator method matches this behavior quite well. If you are fishing a stream where you can wade close to the water you want to fish the high-sticking and Czech nymphing methods also work well. Like most winter nymphing, strikes will usually be soft, so any method that improves your ability to feel or see strikes the better.

The last nymph in my winter line-up is the golden stone nymph. This is just a great searching nymph pattern that is effective all year. Golden stone nymphs (Family Perlidae) require two to three years to mature, which means nymphs are present in different stages all the time. It also means that most nymphs are not the large (size 6, 3XL) fully mature nymphs that hatch in late May through July. Most nymphs are considerably smaller and best imitated with patterns in sizes 12 to 10. That's what I like to use in the winter: a size 12 or 10 3XL golden stone nymph.

The naturals are voracious predators and actively crawl around on the stream bottom in search of

Bead-head Pale Morning Dun (Rick Hafele)



Hook: 1X short scud hook, size 12-16
Head: Gold bead
Thread: Brown 6/0 or 8/0
Tails: 3-6 brown hen hackle fibers
Rib: Copper wire
Body: Brown nymph dubbing
Wingcase (optional): Dark grey or black goose
Thorax: Pine squirrel spun in dubbing loop

Brooks Golden Stone Nymph (Charles Brooks with slight modifications by Rick)



Hook: 3X long, size 10-12
Weight: 12-15 turns non-lead wire, diameter of hook shank
Thread: Black 6/0 or 8/0
Tails: 2 pheasant tail fibers
Rib: Copper wire
Body: Medium brown dubbing
Shellback: Turkey tail section pulled over top of body
Thorax: 2-4 turns of brown hen hackle
Head: Reddish brown dubbing

I use other nymph patterns as well depending on specific situations, but these consistently find themselves attached to the end of my leader.

HUGHES-MORRIS-HAFELE

little mayflies, midges, and caddis larvae to eat. While active, they are not good swimmers and when drifting in the current they tend to glide and tumble until they bump into another rock to grab onto. Thus, getting your nymph close to the bottom and letting it drift naturally with the current is the best approach. One of my favorite nymphing set-ups is to use two nymphs with the golden stone first then a small mayfly or caddis nymph tied onto a 15 to 20 inch dropper attached to the hook bend of the golden stone. It often seems that two nymphs out fish a single nymph, so it is definitely worth a try. Note: Fishing two flies at once is illegal in some areas - check the fishing regulations first!



This fat rainbow took a size 18 Krystal Flash BWO nymph after ignoring larger more appetizing (to me!) stonefly nymphs . Air temp was 28 degrees. Water temp? Damn cold!

More from Dave, Skip, and Rick on video at the links below!

Skip and Rick discuss winter trout fishing: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yoy6CsHA2kk>